

Minutes Commission on Disability Concerns August 19, 2003

Minutes of the Commission on Disability Concerns held on August 19, 2003, 7:00 p.m., at the Pyle Adult Center, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Paul Bennewitz, Kathleen Green, John Horne III, Irene Mochel, Rich Nolan, Carol Payant, Barbara Jane Shelton, Karen Walters

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Mike Franjevic, Carl Hoxeng, Deiedre Leisure, Jerry Pies

Staff Present:

Martha Cronin, Tempe Community Council

Guests Present:

Morris Anderson, President, Accessible Housing Specialists; Tony Sirhan, Construction Supervisor for Accessible Housing Specialists; and Sherry Vallejos, Owner of Portland Homes and member of the Phoenix Disability Commission.

Meeting convened at 7:10 p.m.

Chair Rich Nolan called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes:

Chair Rich Nolan called for approval of the commission minutes dated June 17, 2003. John Horne made a motion to approve the minutes, and Carol Payant seconded. The minutes were approved.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Speaker: Morris Anderson, Founder and Executive Director of Accessible Housing Specialists

Mr. Anderson provided some background about himself and how he got into the business of accessible housing.

- 1) He explained that he has been an advocate for disability issues for eighteen years. While planning to remodel a duplex for his own use, he received a great deal of support for his modification ideas. This prompted him to establish his own nonprofit organization, Accessible Housing Specialists. He explained that the focus of his organization is on both accessibility and affordability. Additionally, Mr. Anderson assists renters in finding the resources they may need to be successful and attain a quality lifestyle.
- 2) Mr. Anderson stated that he has completed one project in Tempe that was a remodel and has bought an empty lot on which he will build an accessible residence. He explained that this new project will also be a duplex; one unit will be rented and the other will be left unoccupied as a model home.
- 3) When asked about how he is receiving monetary support for his efforts, Mr. Anderson explained that he just recently received his nonprofit status and is in the process of seeking business and government support for his organization.
- 4) Kathleen Green asked whether progress has been made in the effort to pass an ordinance in Phoenix requiring at least one accessible entrance in all newly constructed homes. Mr. Anderson explained that Pima County has already passed such an ordinance and there is an aggressive effort underway to pass a similar ordinance in Phoenix. Kathleen requested that the draft ordinance be sent to the Commission for review and discussion at the next meeting. Mr. Anderson explained that this proposed ordinance would be minimally intrusive for the new home developer. Sheri Vallejos added that her company, Portland Homes, is the only housing developer that voluntarily complies with the precepts of the proposed ordinance. She also explained

that the additional cost of including universal features is negligible, approximately \$355 more than standard models.

- 5) Rich Nolan requested a description of some of the universal design features included in Mr. Anderson's duplexes. Mr. Anderson explained that the first project was off of Rural and the 202. It was a 40 year old duplex with narrow hallways and rotting wood. All doors ways were expanded to 36 inches wide. Counter tops were lowered to 32 inches, roll-out shelves were added to all cabinets, lower storage space was maximized as much as possible. The hallways into the restrooms were eliminated, creating a 5 ft. turning radius. Bathrooms include roll-in showers and grab bars. Contrasting colors were used along the baseboards to aid those with a visual impairment.
- 6) Janie Shelton asked whether anyone has quantified the market for universal features in homes. Mr. Anderson and Ms. Vallejos stated that recent census numbers suggest that 15% of the population has a disability, and when the elderly are figured into the equation, roughly 32% of the population would likely benefit from accessible features in homes.
- 7) Mr. Anderson suggested commissioners visit the website, lifespanlivability.com, for additional information about universal design features and resources for those with disabilities.

Oktoberfest Wheelchair Obstacle Course

Kathleen Green reported on planning progress regarding the Wheelchair Obstacle Course Event. She distributed a hand-out to Commissioners that described the volunteer needs and the layout for the obstacle course. She said that the shifts will be four hours long and there will be two volunteers per shift. Donations will be requested, but there will be no charge. Awareness and sensitivity will be the primary goal. Tasks will be assigned.

Rich Nolan asked Martha Cronin to send out an email reminder of the need for volunteers for the obstacle course.

Report from the Committee on Architectural Compliance

Kathleen Green reported that no additional business was covered aside from the Oktoberfest event described above.

Discuss forming a nominating committee to select the next Commission Chair and Vice Chair

Rich Nolan stated the need to call together a nominating committee to select the new Commission Chair and Vice Chair. Kathleen Green and Paul Bennewitz volunteered to serve on the nominating committee, and John Horne may also participate if he is available. Rich Nolan stated that he will call the committee together.

Determine topics for the September 16, 2003 meeting

A suggestion was made to have the State ADA coordinator address the commission. Martha Cronin stated the need to formulate a process outline for the Disability Task Force, and Kathleen Green requested the City of Phoenix proposed ordinance to require at least one accessible entrance in all new home construction.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Prepared by: Martha Cronin

Reviewed by:

Authorized Signature
Chair, Commission on Disability Concerns